MARKETING FOCUS GROUPS

April/May 1995

SUMMARY

2060303302

Source: https://www.industrydocuments.ucsf.edu/docs/jkmm0004

WHAT'S GOING WELL

- The business; Communications to us regarding the business
- Quality of people in Marketing--wonderful, talented, creative, enthusiastic, nice, energy
- Acceptance of creative, out-of-box thinking
- Opportunities to get together outside work (conferences, race, bowling, theater night)
- Top management willing to listen, accessible, visible, straight answers
- Room for humor--OK to have fun
- Sense of security
- Benefits and perks (e.g., store, fitness center)
- Continuous improvement efforts
- Resources we have (money, expertise, support)
- Entry-level responsibility and challenge
- Brown bag lunch meetings
- PM is an ethical company...spirit of the law

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AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT MENTIONED

- Recruiting process
- Performance Appraisal process
- Purchasing process
- Work-family balance
- Involvement and respect given Fulfillment
- Collective competency of Marketing

Quotes:

"PM is a neat place to be"

"In spite of everything else, I love coming to work here"

"Diversity is not just talk"

"I feel like I'm in the center of things in Marketing"

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WHERE ARE THE FRUSTRATIONS?

Training and Development

Lack of:

- opportunities to learn entire process (R&D, Manufacturing)
- orientation for new employees
- performance feedback
- management support--can't get permission; crisis comes up; no encouragement
- opportunities to develop leadership, DM, supervisory skills

- What is vision for our future and what skills will be required?

- How do we get developed if boss presents our work; or if it becomes a "hot" project my boss takes over Project Leader role?

- Not allowing us in meetings or on market checks inhibits our learning
- Can't get supervisor experience but need it to move ahead (Catch-22)

- Not a lot of opportunity for skill training--depends on how your management values it--should this be systematic or ad hoc?
- The boss' role" in developing people not a priority--those who do aren't rewarded

- Managers should be rated on how well they develop people
- "Success" is not defined

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Career Development

- Lack of explanation of lateral moves; career discussions (options, preferences, development)
- Planned succession?--random, reactionary, no rationale "January shuffle"; "powerless pawns"

- Bringing in Brand Manager's from outside eliminates opportunity and indicates that experience/training here isn't good enough
- Some people who want to move for broader experience get resistance

- Jim Morgan says "I can take good people and put them anywhere..."--why not try it?
- "I'm stifled by the structure in my department--How do I grow and develop?"

- Opportunities depend on which SILO you're in
- Should you be recognized for experience or development programs?

- Reward key functional experience
- We as individuals need to take more active role in our own growth and development

- We want promotions based on individual merit not as a class
- "No one sits us down and explains job expectations"

- Lack of definition of career path (moving from Marlboro is viewed as "down")
- "There is a 'glass curtain' around Brand"

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LEVELISM

- Grade 14 is a widespread issue
  - dining room
  - LBCo. party
  - meetings/presentations
  - "you're no one until you become a 14"

- "There's Brand and there's everybody else"
  - group promotions
  - services people don't get promotions

- Brand has a 'centrist' attitude and pandering to them takes on more importance than dealing with reality

- I get attention and respect from OPB and "preached to" by Marlboro
- Marlboro group is more reasonable now than in the past

- "The school you attended seems to matter"
- You need the "right" MBA to get into Brand..is school more impt than performance?

- If you're not in the 'in-group' your opportunities seem to be less"

"Too much deference to titles vs. recognizing and leveraging diversity of thought"

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RECOGNITION AND RESPECT

- We work hard...most of us...but not recognized (kind word, money, etc.) just show us you're aware and appreciate
- Lack of recognition for your work

- We do all the work (for presentation) and even if invited to meeting can't talk and don't get credit
- After meetings we hear results from agency vs. our management

- We know more about our programs than our management but they don't ask our opinions enough
- Three of four services groups thought they were the STEPCHILD in Marketing

- Lack of respect for functional expertise;
  (authority and power don't equate to a functional expert)
- Brand has a lack of respect (understanding) for functional (services) processes and field ("I don't give a s--- what the field wants... just tell them to do it")

- Lack of respect for people's time--joke is "that's PM time"
- Meetings without agenda--I'm asked to attend, expected to participate--no one tells me topic/issue in advance. Late meetings, going overtime, too many meetings

- In some areas if you don't have five years tobacco experience you're nothing-don't need to be listened to
- A lack of decision making empowerment means I operate at a lower level than my grade would dictate

- Our judgment is not valued

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TEAMS/TEAMWORK

- Transitioning from "Marketing driven" to realization that Marketing is dependent on other organizations more than ever. Marketing people set selves 'above' other functions--lack of understanding of other's role--other's afraid of Marketing--this level (in room) understand Brand's role is changing
- Not everyone has bought into the concept of teams

- Not everyone is on board with the concept of input from support groups
- Brand can get support folks more involved in finished product and they (support groups) can educate us on their process

- Need to build partnerships with Brand and support functions...start with new people
- We know the value of cross-functional parallel processing and make it happen in spite of them (management)

- Process of involving wide range of stakeholders is more painful but yields better results
- While painful, the weekly continuity meetings are critically important in integrating work

- Lack of information sharing (learnings, knowledge) across brands
- Willingness to share decreases as you go up the organization

- Need to reinforce the concept of individual accountability for team members on specific project outcomes
- Level of decision-making authority on teams is an issue

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LBCO.

- Agency believes they're the client
- Working with THE agency is frustrating

- The agency's compensation system doesn't promote us (DB) doing our jobs well
- Agency and Brand have little direct marketing experience

- Agency manages up (don't waste time in trenches)
- Agency is reactive not proactive

- We don't manage vendors...we are the customer!
- Share "agreements' with us--information to use in managing our budgets

- If we challenge service level from LBCo., we don't get support -
  single comment from LBCo. can show up on my PA "not a team player" -
  done at VP level

- Lack of resources at LBCo. leads to missed schedules on projects

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OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Purchasing

- Purchasing's goals not aligned with Brand's
- Brand has to initiate too much on status vs. Purchasing initiating the information

- Too often interactions between Brand and Purchasing are confrontational-
  -tell me why vs. just no!

- No tracking system for vendors we need report card
- Purchasing: packaging of incentives

IS

- We're the client for some groups (IS) and deserve same respect that we show Brand
- IS gets rewarded for doing things that don't help me move forward
- IS has a resource problem

Other

- Bidding process...responding to Finance, et. al. - they want us to make changes
  (not specific) without understanding that bid is competitive
- Lack of accountability (Finance, IS, in general)
- 80% of some jobs is supporting Brand, how is level of support recognized?

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PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

- A lot of our managers are abusive with their people--not only no negative consequences for it but seems to be how you get promoted
- Public humiliation (meetings and e-mail)

- Lack of interpersonal skills seems to be rewarded if not condoned--also favoritism
- Managing Brands supersedes managing people

- Styles of management differ across Brand (e.g. freedom to express ideas); conflicting messages...hurt on Performance Appraisal
- You have to prove yourself all over again if you change brands

- There are many "committees of good taste" that you need to get into or you're not accepted-- promotions are driven by inclusion/friendship
- Good things seem to happen for reasons other than merit

- The only "people skill" at grade level 14+ is kissing up
- Way to get ahead is create a crisis ~ blame peons ~ Brand Manager "fixes" and takes credit

- Too much E-mail in lieu of face-to-face contact
- More MBWA (including cafeteria) could replace these meetings

- Managers go to assessment centers and come back with attitude "they're wrong" and don't take personal development seriously
- 360 degree feedback is exception vs. norm...could be used to address some of these issues

- You have to threaten to leave to get attention--then only favorites are saved
- Focus on errors/mistakes--<diving analogy>

- In spite of above, there are some very good managers--but, they get little recognition for their people skills

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COMPENSATION

- Not compensated for "industry" or for not getting full marketing experience (TV, one product)
- Salary--especially entry level in New York
- Tobacco experience can hurt you on outside

- Incentive compensation needs to be taken lower to reward those who are driving the business
- Bonus doesn't go to all eligible--when you get it, it's not much--not tied to performance -even if it was, the forced curve isn't fair

- Too much money wasted (e.g., LEAP, consultants)
- Media is under graded and undervalued--"I have to move even though I like what I do"

- Why not grade levels within a job--reward functional experience
- Lack of comprehension of how grade relates to position

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WORKLOAD

- Our leanness is a plus (broad responsibility) but too lean to be strategic
- We don't invest enough in technology to help people do their job
  (There were different POV's on this issue)

- 11-12 hour days are the norm
- Management's expectations, regarding workload, are different for different people

- "Balance"--industry is driving us at such a pace that balance is difficult!
- Workload (nights/weekends, etc.)

- Sometimes demands on us are unrealistic because Brand Managers and Vice Presidents don't understand executional complexity and time requirements--also can't train us
- Lack of time for QUALITY:
  - conversations
  - work
  - analysis

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PROCESS

- Decision-making inefficiency creates long lead times and leads to padding
- They (Brand) waste money and it's OK---but they'll jump on us

- Six business units involved in a mailing
- I would like to have more say in business processes that affect me (execution and structure)

- I feel like a pinball...i.e., legal, agency, Brand, etc. all have to be covered off on decisions
- Project Management training will have less impact until processes are fixed

- Bidding process (Purchasing) needs to be clarified
- Improve legal approval process

- Strategist and executionists...Brand and support should give and take on both ends

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OTHER

- Each new Senior Vice President/Vice President has different vision as to how to use direct -Is there a LT vision/ goal?
- PM is too secretive--Succession Plans, bonus, organization charts (yellow pages), CLE et. al., task forces underway to solve problems
- We haven't gone far enough with Work-Family balance (e.g. job share, work at home, part-time with benefits); and , don't set our careers back if we choose one of these options (three day week doesn't mean five days squeezed into three)
- Often takes a crisis for us to change something
- New recruiting seems to be creative more "sameness" vs. diversity

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